

Homeless in tents in the green: 'Bad for outdoor sleepers, but also unsafe for walkers'



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Tents of outdoor sleepers in Belvedere, Scheveningse Bosjes © Omroep West

THE HAGUE - 'This is what we want to prevent', says the Hague VVD faction leader Lotte van Basten Batenburg while she is in the Scheveningen

Bushes points to two hidden tents. 'It is bad for the people who sleep outside here, but also causes feelings of discomfort and discomfort

insecurity among people who walk or walk the dog in our forests and parks.' The VVD has therefore drawn up an 'action plan', which will be implemented quickly

all tents must be out of the green of The Hague.

First of all, the VVD wants to [enforce stricter measures against sleeping outside](#) in forests, dunes and parks. 'It is impossible for us to leave those tents standing.

It is also simply prohibited," the group leader states firmly. But Van Basten Batenburg also sees that when the rough sleepers are sent away somewhere the same people and tents pop up again somewhere else. 'There are tents here in the Scheveningen woods, but also in the Hubertus Park, in the Haagse Bos, in all public green areas.'

The VVD's plan therefore provides a location where those who sleep outside must go. There are some facilities there such as toilets, showers and a common place to eat. People can still sleep in their own tents if they want to. 'As far as we are concerned, that should come down to the edges of the city', Van Basten Batenburg explains. The party is thinking of the area near Prins Clausplein, near Drievliet or at the intersection of highway A4 and N14.

The people living in the tents are largely 'disenfranchised homeless', migrant workers from the European Union. They often travel to the Netherlands come for (temporary) work, where their accommodation is also arranged through the employer. When work stops, they become homeless. They have no right in a place in regular shelter, because they have not built up any rights under the Social Support Act (Wmo).

Through an 'intensive process', people must be helped by the municipality within six to eight weeks to find a job again and with that housing. "Or they must cooperate in voluntarily returning to their country of origin," adds the leader of the Hague VVD.

She admits that in the [college's homeless policy](#) Attention is also paid to the shelter of homeless people without rights, but those plans are somewhat different Basten Batenburg not specific enough. 'That policy framework focuses on the long term and has no concrete goals. A practical solution is now needed.

The weather will be nicer again, and the problems with people sleeping outside will only increase.'



VVD faction leader Lotte van Basten Batenburg in the Scheveningen woods © Omroep West

The plan of the Hague VVD is very similar to a pilot project that has recently been running in Rotterdam and that is no coincidence, says the VVD leader.

to. She wants the four major cities to work together to make it possible to return to their country of origin.

"You can force people to return, but that is a difficult process," says Van Basten Batenburg. For this it is necessary to create a personal file

in which the nuisance is recorded. Then fines have to be issued again and again. 'The four major cities should come together

to increase contact with the countries of origin about taking back their citizens.'

Tackling employment agencies

D66 in the Hague council also wants something to be done about the tents with unauthorized homeless people in green spaces in the city. According to councilor Caroline

Verduin is The Hague '[the capital of homelessness](#)'.

She specifically looks at the employment agencies that bring migrant workers here as the starting point of the solution. 'We have to keep going construction and also provide shelter to homeless migrant workers. We need to tackle employment agencies that exploit migrant workers and think twice about what economy we want to have,' says Verduin.



A hidden tent in the Scheveningen woods © Omroep West

Hart voor Den Haag also wants the tents to disappear from the greenery in The Hague. Councilor Rita Verdonk asked questions about this earlier this month: 'The illegal tent dwellers should therefore be fined and referred to organizations that can guide them to work or to them country of origin'.

Meanwhile, VVD member Van Basten Batenburg is walking past a deep hole next to a fallen tree in Belvédère Park in the Scheveningse Bosjes. The hole is down full of waste. "This is what you get when people live here," she sighs. "The bushes become half a rubbish dump." Van Basten Batenburg concludes with: 'Once again, I feel very sorry for those people, but those tents all have to be thrown out of the bushes.'

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The Hague VVD political party wants to move homeless people from parks in the center to the edges of the city. (Like leprosy patients in the Middle Ages, they were often placed outside the city walls).